CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 30 April 2012 at 9.00 a.m.

Members Present:

Cabinet: Councillors J Fuller (Chairman)
          Y Bendle, D Bills, K Kiddie, G Wheatley, M Wilby

Non-Appointed: Councillors D Blake, T Blowfield, M Edney, F Ellis, C Foulger,
                D Goldson, M Gray, N Legg, T Lewis, J Mooney,
                A Palmer, B Riches, R Savage, G Walden, K Weeks.

Officers in Attendance: The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive, the Director of Development and Environment, the Business Improvement Manager, the Compliance and Risk Manager, the Financial Services Manager, the Corporate Asset Manager, the Planning Policy Manager, the Council’s Consultant, the Planning Officer and the Performance Review Officer.

2065 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following members declared personal interests in the matter listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Minute No.</th>
<th>Nature of Interest</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr M Wilby</td>
<td>2070</td>
<td>Owns land to be considered in the Site Specific Policies and Allocations DPD (not in those areas considered today)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colin Foulger</td>
<td>2079</td>
<td>Members of Wymondham Town Council</td>
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<td>Robert Savage</td>
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2066 URGENT ITEMS

(a) Incident in Reception

Cabinet was very sorry to hear that there had been an incident in the Council’s reception the previous Friday, which had resulted in the Housing Standards Manager, Tony Cooke, being assaulted. Members wished Mr Cooke a speedy recovery.
(b) Vera Alexander

Members were very sorry to hear that former Councillor, Vera Alexander, had recently died. Cabinet paid tribute to Mrs Alexander’s 30 year service.

(c) Peer Review

Cllr M Wilby reported that the preliminary feedback from the Peer Review on Localism had been most positive. Once received, the official feedback from the Review would be circulated widely.

2067 MINUTES

Cllr M Gray, referring to the penultimate paragraph of minute number 2054, South Norfolk Council’s Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document: Preferred Options, requested that the words “Norwich Policy Area and main growth locations” be replaced with “rural market towns”.

Subject to this change, the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Monday 26 March 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2068 PERFORMANCE REVIEW QUARTER 4

The subject of the decision

The Business Improvement Manager presented members with a review of the Council’s performance to the end of Quarter 4 of the financial year 2011/12.

Members noted that this was the first time that performance information had been presented through the new Business Management System. It was anticipated that the system would be linked to the Council’s financial systems in the coming months and it was hoped that the full benefits of this would be evident by Quarter 2 of 2012/13.

The Business Improvement Manager presented the Council’s 38 strategic indictors to members, focussing on those areas that had not hit target and had been highlighted with either amber or red. Overall the Council’s performance had been strong with 69% of indicators improving, 4% staying the same, and 27% not hitting target.

The following performance measures were raised:

LI 407: Payment of Invoices within the agreed terms or 30 days

The Financial Services Manager explained that performance had started to improve following staff training sessions in September 2011. Officers were currently investigating other ways of improving performance, through for example paying utility bills by direct debit. Following queries from members regarding the level of target set, the Chief Executive reminded members that targets could be
reviewed if necessary. This target had originally been set high in order to assist small businesses, ensuring that they were paid on time.

**LI 211: % of Car Park Tickets Issued**
Members noted that tickets issued had reduced by 4% and this was attributed to the economic downturn and cost of fuel.

**LI 624: % of Complaints Resolved at Stage 1**
Members noted the outturn of 85% against a target of 95%. The Business Improvement Manager advised members that the original target had been set too high. A new measure for 2012/13 would concentrate on the number of complaints at Stage 2, identifying areas where Stage 1 could be improved.

**BV 010: % of Non-Domestic Rates Collected**
Members noted that collection rates were 0.5% down on the previous year but it was stressed that performance rates were still good considering the current economic climate.

**BV 012: Working Days Lost due to Sickness Absence**
Although this performance measure had not quite hit target, it was noted that the outturn figure of 7.84 days compared well to the national average of 9.6.

**LI 646: No. of Sewage Treatment Plants Adopted**
Members noted that 23 sewage treatment plants had been adopted against a target of 24. An unexpected requirement for lifting equipment had delayed the transfer of two additional works but these would be complete by the end of Quarter 1.

**LI 260: % Fly Tips removed within 2 Days**
The Business Improvement Manager explained that out of 740 tips reported, most had been removed within 2 days. There were a number of reasons why tips had not been removed within the timescales and this included fly tips that were not easy to locate, clearance being delayed to allow for investigations to obtain evidence and the need for specialist removal.

**NI 157a: % Major Applications determined within 13 Weeks**
The Chairman drew members’ attention to the delays caused through the involvement of Norfolk County Council Highways Department.

**LI 348: Number of Housing Completions**
It was noted that the final figure of 174 was based on the recorded completion figures from CNC and did not include NHBC inspected completions. The final figure would be compiled by the end of April 2012, although it was likely that the completion total would be below target. This was contributed to market factors beyond the control of the Council. Some members expressed concerns that this would affect the New Homes Bonus funding and the Financial Services Manager confirmed that this would have an impact, but reminded members that this funding was not just based on new properties, but also empty homes that had been brought back in to use.

**LI 284: Overall Crime reported in the District**
There had been a slight increase in crime reported across the District. Police were targeting rural crime and a decrease was expected in the following quarter.
LI 619: Savings produced from LEAN
The Business Improvement Manager reported that Lean Lite reviews had identified a further £180,000 of cashable savings in 2011/12, which would be released by Quarter 2 of 2012/13.

The Business Improvement Manager then gave a brief demonstration of “My South Norfolk” on the Council’s website. This facility enabled residents to customise their screen, providing information local to the user, for example bin collection dates, planning applications in the local vicinity and details on local councillors.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To note the performance for Quarter 4 2011/12 and the actions taken by officers to address any performance issues.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure the Council is providing value for money and delivering on its priorities.

2069 FINANCIAL REVIEW QUARTER 4

The subject of the decision

The Financial Services Manager provided a verbal update on the financial position of the Council to the end of Quarter 4.

The Financial Services Manager reported that the overall estimated variance was £1.8 million. Movements since the last quarter when the estimate was £1.9 million included a £200,000 provision for legal fees, offset partially by an increase in income at the Council’s Leisure Centres and recovered income through Housing Benefits.

Cllr G Wheatley was pleased that the Council was ahead of the game when it came to savings, but stressed that it would not pay to be complacent. He drew particular attention to the excellent performance of the Leisure Centres.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive and all staff for their efforts; he recognised that it had not been easy to deliver year on year savings, whilst maintaining good performance.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To note the preliminary financial position for Quarter 4 2011/12.
The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that the Council is prepared to face the financial challenges ahead, whilst delivering on its priorities.

2070 SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCIL’S SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES AND ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: PREFERRED OPTIONS (PART 2)

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which sought Cabinet approval with regard to sites, which would form part of the next consultation stage of the Council’s Site Specific Policies and Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD).

The Chairman explained that this was the second phase of sites for consideration, which included the market towns away from Norwich, namely Diss, Loddon, Hingham and Chedgrave. He anticipated a Special Meeting of the Cabinet to take place on 21 May to consider a third phase of sites.

Members noted that the Local Planning Steering Group had considered each site in detail and this Group was satisfied that on the current evidence, these sites performed best when judged against the assessment framework, previously agreed by Cabinet. During discussion, the Chief Executive stressed the importance of members understanding the assessment criteria on which sites were judged. She also reminded members that this was a structured process and that there had already been an opportunity to comment on all of the sites. All comments would be taken in to account following the consultation process.

Referring to paragraph 3.2 of the report, Cllr M Gray asked if it was known how many dwellings had already been allocated in the rural areas, suggesting that a table setting out the Joint Core Strategy requirements and the proposed sites, would be helpful. The Planning Policy Manager explained that this would all be set out within the consultation document. Taking in to account those sites agreed at previous meetings and the suggested sites contained within the report, 1159 dwellings had already been proposed which was within the range set out in the Joint Core Strategy.

Diss

The Planning Policy Manager explained that there was a target of 300 new dwellings in Diss, but due to planning permissions already granted, there was now a need to find 200 new homes.

Four sites for housing and one for employment had been identified. Sites identified for housing were located at Frenze Hall Lane, land south of Victoria Road, land south of Park Road, and land to the west on the Diss / Roydon border. An area in the East of the town was likely to retain its planning permission for industrial use. There had been a number of proposed sites which had been unsuccessful due to traffic issues and distance from the town centre.

The proposal for 42 new homes on the West of the town provoked some discussion. Cllr D Goldson opposed the development which would spill over the border in to Roydon and he drew attention to planning consent for 102 new homes.
in Roydon a couple of years back. Cllr G Walden suggested that a development nearer to Scole, with close proximity to the A140 may be more appropriate. The Planning Policy Manager stressed that the proposed sites were based on current evidence and that there might be a need to reconsider sites following the consultation process.

**Harleston**
Members noted that there were three proposed sites; an existing allocation from the last Local Plan which when reassessed scored highly, an existing employment allocation which the land owner would now consider for housing, and a site in the North which was proposed for a small scale retail and community facility. Cllr B Riches confirmed that he was satisfied with the proposals.

**Hingham**
One site for housing and one other for employment had been identified in Hingham. Cllr Y Bendle felt the proposed site for dwellings to be appropriate, although one or two smaller sites may have been preferable to some residents.

**Loddon**
The Planning Policy Manager explained that one site, previously allocated in the last Local Plan for employment use would be deleted. There was a new medical centre to the West of the town and the area adjacent to this could accommodate more than the 200 homes needed to satisfy the Joint Core Strategy. Cllr D Blake expressed his support for the allocation, which would be near the medical centre and be within close access to the A146.

**Chedgrave**
Members noted that a large development had been put forward in Loddon, which was more than enough to satisfy the requirements of the Joint Core Strategy.

**The Decision**

**RESOLVED:**
To agree the sites shown as preferred options in the appendices to the report as the Council’s preferred options for Diss, Harleston, Loddon/Chedgrave and Hingham, noting that these sites will be included in the preferred options consultation document, to be published in the Summer 2012.

**The Reasons for the Decision**
To ensure planned and co-ordinated future development, allowing residents to be involved in shaping communities.
2071 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Planning Policy Manager, which provided a synopsis of the recently published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and highlighted the implications for South Norfolk Council.

The Planning Policy Manager outlined the salient points of the report to members and referred to the appended schedule, devised to assist members of the Planning Committee when determining planning applications. Members noted that at the heart of the NPPF was the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which need to be central to the Council’s plan making and decision taking.

The Planning Policy Manager drew attention to paragraph 3.10 of the report regarding the requirement for the Council to demonstrate it had a readily available supply of housing land. Members were informed that the minimum requirement was 5 years supply, plus 5% and that for those authorities that had “persistently under-delivered” this went up to 5 years plus 20%. It was noted that there was no clear definition of “under-delivered”. Officers believed that South Norfolk Council had for a long time consistently hit targets, and would therefore be aiming for the minimum requirement. However, it was noted that there was not even 4 years’ supply of housing land in the Norwich Policy Area of the District.

Members’ attention was also drawn to paragraph 2.5 of the report which explained that for 12 months after 28 March 2012, the Council could continue to give full weight to the Joint Core Strategy as it was adopted after 2004, even where there was a limited degree of conflict with the NPPF. Members noted that the saved policies of the South Norfolk Plan adopted before 2004 did not enjoy the same status and the weight that these policies carried varied depending on their degree of consistency with NPPF.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To endorse the Schedule appended to the report as the Council’s statement of the degree of consistency of the saved policies of the South Norfolk Local Plan to the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework and to assist members in the decision making process.

2072 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The subject of the decision

Members considered the report of the Compliance and Risk Manager which presented Cabinet with a new Procurement Strategy 2012 -2015, for the Council.
The Compliance and Risk Manager presented her report, explaining that the Strategy had been considered at the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 April 2012. The outcomes of the discussions at Scrutiny Committee were highlighted at paragraph 2.3 of the report and as a result of these discussions, some amendments had been made to the Strategy.

Cllr K Weeks raised some points of concern; that the Strategy referred to “Professional Procurement” being managed within Services areas, and that there was no mention of member involvement as part of any procurement process.

The Financial Services Manager explained that the strategic framework for procurement was managed by an expert in procurement, but some input from service managers with their own areas of expertise was required. She reminded members that procurement formed part of the governance arrangements which fell under the remit of the Accounts Audit and Governance Committee.

Members noted the member training session on financial governance and procurement, scheduled for 8 May 2012.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the Procurement Strategy.

The Reasons for the Decision

To approve a strategy that is aligned to existing Council priorities and strategies, and acts as an enabler to deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

2073 VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The subject of the decision

Members considered a report which sought Cabinet approval for a Volunteering Policy and outlined the Community Awards Scheme, designed to recognise and celebrate significant achievements in the community.

Members were informed that the purpose of the Strategy was to set out a co-ordinated approach to volunteering and some of the ways in which the Council would work with volunteers. Cabinet’s attention was drawn to the Community Awards Scheme, set up to encourage and celebrate local volunteering.

Some members expressed concern that the policy would create a bureaucratic process which could deter some volunteers. Members were informed that this was a standard process which most voluntary organisations would welcome as it provided protection for both the volunteer and the Council, ensuring their work was trusted and that the two organisations were working in true partnership. The Chairman added that the Council had a duty of care to ensure that work carried out by volunteers was consistent and complied with statutory requirements including issues relating to health and safety.
Members noted that Appendices C and D of the Policy had not been included in the report and the officers agreed to circulate these after the meeting.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the volunteering policy and the community awards scheme as part of the Council’s overall approach to volunteering.

The Reasons for the Decision

To provide an effective framework for the Council’s partnerships with the voluntary sector, ensuring obligations are met.

2074 FOOD WASTE

Members noted that the Council had submitted an expression of interest to the Department for Communities and Local Government, for funding towards weekly food waste collections.

2075 CABINET CORE AGENDA

Members noted the latest version of the Cabinet Core Agenda.

2076 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

2077 LAND AT CHESTNUT ROAD, PULHAM ST MARY

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Property Consultant which considered options for the sale of land at The Chestnuts, Pulham St Mary.
The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To submit a revised planning application for the development of the site together with the adjoining land.

2. To progress the joint sale of the land at the Chestnuts Pulham St Mary and agree to a sale, subject to the conditions outlined at paragraph 7.2 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure a capital receipt for the Council, whilst ensuring the delivery of affordable dwellings.

2078 PORINGLAND – LAND AT SHOTESHAM ROAD

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Property Consultant regarding a landowner co-operation agreement.

The Decision

RESOLVED:

1. To complete the Landowner Co-operation Agreement with Norfolk Homes Ltd

2. Assuming planning permission is granted, to proceed with the further detailed evaluation of the options available to the Council in delivery of the site infrastructure, development of the office accommodation and disposal of the residential land.

The Reasons for the Decision

To ensure both areas of land can be developed independently whilst at the same time ensuring that the necessary infrastructure is delivered as expeditiously and cost effectively as possible.

2079 14 MIDDLETON STREET WYMONDHAM (WYMONDHAM TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES) LEASE RENEWAL

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Property Consultant regarding the renewal of the lease on 14 Middleton Street, Wymondham, due to expire on 30 September 2012.
The Decision

RESOLVED: To serve notice on Wymondham Town Council to renew the lease and commence negotiations on the terms set out at paragraph 3 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

Renewing the lease under the terms set out in the report ensures that the asset maintains its value.

2080 RENT REVIEW – ABBEY PRODUCTS, AYTON ROAD, WYMONDHAM

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report, which sought Cabinet approval for officers to implement the recommended rent review of industrial premises at Ayton Road, Wymondham.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To agree to a nil increase to the rent as outlined at paragraph 3 of the report.

The Reasons for the Decision

Comparable evidence of current market rents does not justify an increase in the rent at the current time.

2081 UNIT 13 WYMONDHAM BUSINESS PARK – PROPOSED LEASE

The subject of the decision

Members considered the exempt report of the Corporate Asset Manager regarding the proposed lease of Unit 13 Wymondham Business Park.

The Decision

RESOLVED: To approve the lease of the unit as detailed in paragraph 8.1 of the report.
The Reasons for the Decision

To maximise a return on this asset, in line with the Asset Management Plan.

(The meeting concluded at 11.15 am)

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Chairman